



# ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

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## Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability shows improvement

Student performance, college/career-readiness and the number of students graduating from high school are improving, according to data released recently by the Kentucky Department of Education.

"The statewide data clearly show we are making progress, though slower than we would like," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "We've raised expectations and aligned them with what students need to be successful; we are moving in the right direction toward the goal of providing a world-class education for every Kentucky student and ensuring all children graduate college/career-ready."

Overall student performance showed improvement from 2012 with the percentage of proficient and distinguished students increasing in nearly every subject at every grade level; students in groups that have historically had achievement gaps also are performing at higher levels.

Since Senate Bill 1 passed in 2009, the state has focused on better preparing students for life after high school. In 2013, the college/career-readiness rate jumped to 54.1 percent – up from 34 percent in 2010.

"In just three years we've gone from only a third of our students being ready for college and career to more than half," Holliday said. "That's around 8,000 students who now have a much better shot at getting a good job, paying taxes and becoming self-sufficient Kentuckians."

Also, more students are getting a diploma. The state is using a new, more accurate way to measure graduation rate that shows 86 percent of students are graduating from high school in four years.



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## Public input sought on draft of high school arts standards

The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), the group spearheading new arts standards, will conduct a public review of substantive portions of the draft high school national core arts standards for dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts through Oct. 21.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate.

In Kentucky, Senate Bill 1 (2009) called for new standards in all content areas, including arts and humanities. The public review of the draft PreK-8 standards was completed this past summer with more than 3,000 arts administrators, parents, educators, teaching artists and community arts providers reviewing the work.

NCCAS is the coalition of national arts and education organizations and media arts representatives that is developing the 2014 National Core Arts Standards. The new, voluntary grade-by-grade Web-based standards are intended to affirm the place of arts education in a balanced core curriculum, support the 21st-century needs of students and teachers and help ensure that all students are college- and career-ready.

The arts standards emphasize “big ideas,” philosophical foundations, enduring understandings/essential questions and anchor/performance standards, all of which are intended to guide local curriculum development and instructional practices that lead to arts literacy for all students.

Public review of the comprehensive draft PreK-12 standards, including examples of model cornerstone assessments, will begin in January 2014, with a projected release date for the finished standards in March.

NCCAS is committed to a state-led, transparent process with frequent public input and access to work updates. For more on the review process and public documents related to the arts standards, visit <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>.

### *Unbridled Learning, from Page 1*

This is the second year the state has reported results from Kentucky's Unbridled Learning for All Assessment and Accountability System.

Based on an improvement in overall scores from 2012, 114 more schools and 31 more districts are performing at the highest levels – classified as either proficient or distinguished. A total of 641 schools and 63 districts met the requirements to be considered progressing, a new label under the system this year.

View a full [news release](#) or for more details, including the data broken down by student group, visit the [School Report Card](#) on the Kentucky Department of Education's [website](#).

These electronic report cards provide information about each school and district, including test performance, teacher qualifications student safety, awards, parent involvement and much more.

The Report Cards must include requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

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## National Conference on Family Literacy

The 23rd National Conference on Family Literacy will be held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 17-19, 2014. [Register online](#).

**New this year:** Preconference sessions will be incorporated into the conference. Two in-depth sessions will provide time to explore standards-based learning and parent engagement with content experts. The Call for Experts inviting proposals for breakout sessions can be found at [www.familit.org/conference/call-for-experts](http://www.familit.org/conference/call-for-experts).

## Parents can help schools get healthy



Casey Hinds (pictured above), of Lexington, serves as a healthy schools program ambassador. She recently wrote five tips for parents on how to help foster a healthy school year for children.

**School rules:** Get familiar with the school and district wellness policies. If your school doesn't have a wellness policy, [contact the Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

**Back away from food prizes:** Candy instead of gold stars? A strong school wellness policy shouldn't allow food as a reward. If your school's policy does not address this, consider sharing the recommendations from the major health organizations to not use [food as a reward](#).

**Fun AND healthy parties:** At a typical school celebration, make fruit and water available. School is a great place to teach children that not all celebrations need to revolve around food, and it's a great life lesson.

**Food is fuel, not funding:** Rethink the typical cookie dough and candy fundraisers. Ask to replace them with the well-being of students like a [Jog-a-thon](#), [PTA 5K](#) or [fruit sale](#).

**Find the fruitcakes:** Speaking of fruit, there is power in numbers, so be on the lookout for other school health advocates. You may find them at a PTA meeting, working on the school garden or coaching a sport. They may find you, too. You also can connect via the Web and social media. Some suggested sites include [Rudd Root Parents](#), [The Lunch Tray](#), [Spoonfed](#), [School Bites](#), [Real Mom Nutrition](#) and [Red, Round or Green](#).

## Connected Educators Month promotes better student outcomes

As part of Connected Educators Month (CEM), Gov. Steve Beshear is joining with leaders from the Kentucky Department of Education, the Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky and the Hope Street Group in encouraging educators in the state to "get connected" to improve their practice and advance student achievement.

"Kentucky is already a nationwide leader in education," Beshear said. "By connecting our teachers and administrators to online professional learning opportunities, we will move even closer to delivering a world-class education for all of our students."

Connected Educator Month uses online communities and networks to support teachers and administrators as they implement standards and develop effective instructional practices to help students learn and become more successful. Educators will use blogs, Twitter chats and other online communities to connect and share ideas. The goal is to bring together educators at all levels and in all disciplines to address key issues and move toward a fully connected and collaborative profession.

In 2012, during the inaugural CEM, more than 170 education organizations held more than 450 online events and activities and reached more than 4 million educators, parents and others in the U.S. and worldwide.

"This effort aligns with Kentucky's ongoing commitment to educator effectiveness and college/career-readiness for all our students," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "The activities taking place this month can have a positive effect on our teachers and students for years to come."

Plans for Connected Educator Month in Kentucky include:

- providing school districts a variety of connected education resources. (The state already provides anytime, anywhere online professional learning through PD 360.)
- sharing blogs from Kentucky educators about being "connected" and how it impacts students. To read daily spotlights on Kentucky Connected Educators, click [here](#).
- participating in Twitter chats (#KyEdChat) each Thursday evening in October from 8:04-9:04 p.m. to provide information and receive feedback from educators and education partners
- promoting habits that sustain and improve digital communities during Digital Citizenship Week, Oct. 21-25
- convening the [Innovate-to-Learn Institute](#) Oct. 28-29 in Lexington that combines the 1:1 Bring Your Own Device Institute and a focus on STEM on the second day
- taking a leadership role on connected education by putting state-led events and related activities on the Connected Educator Month [calendar](#) for sharing with other states

Parents wanting more information about CEM should visit [www.connectededucatormonth.org](http://www.connectededucatormonth.org).



## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **Children, first lady to go for a world record in largest shared reading event**

First Lady Jane Beshear recently announced that she and students from Cochran Elementary (Jefferson County) will join children and adults from across the country to set a new world record for the largest shared reading event, Jumpstart's Read for the Record Day on Oct. 3.

Read for the Record is part of a nationwide early education awareness campaign that focuses attention on the importance of reading.

The 2013 Read for the Record book selection is *Otis*, by Kentucky native and *New York Times* bestselling author Loren Long. The story is about a small, special tractor named Otis, who is called upon to save the day when his larger counterpart is unable to help.

We Give Books is offering free digital downloads of *Otis* at [www.wegivebooks.org](http://www.wegivebooks.org).

For more information about Jumpstart's Read for the Record, including how to register for this year's campaign, visit [www.wegivebooks.org/readfortherecord](http://www.wegivebooks.org/readfortherecord).

### **Five Kentucky schools win Blue Ribbon honors**

The U. S. Department of Education named five Kentucky public schools as 2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in improving student academic achievement. See the [news release](#) for more information.

### **Best Practice schools and districts recognized**

The Kentucky Department of Education has recognized 11 schools and districts for identifying and sharing best practices through the department's Best Practices website. See the [news release](#) for more information.

### **Kentucky schools recognized for working conditions**

Ten Kentucky public schools have been recognized for their teaching conditions, school safety and student achievement. See the [news release](#) for more information.

## **24 Ashland teacher achievement awards winners named**

The Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc. have selected 24 outstanding Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2014 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards (TAA). These teachers qualify to compete for the 2014 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced later this month.

The 24 winning teachers, listed by school district, are:

Bracken County – Robin Rath-Fultz, Taylor Elementary

Carter County – Beverly McDavid, West Carter Middle

Elizabethtown Independent – Derisa Hindle, T.K. Stone Middle

Fayette County – Cynthia L. Brown, Lexington Traditional Magnet; Scot Gill, Tates Creek High; Melanie Trowel, Carter G. Woodson Academy; Catherine Vannatter, Bryan Station High

Floyd County – Cortney Flannery, Betsy Layne High; Amanda Lee, May Valley Elementary

Hardin County – Kathy Thompson, Central Hardin High

Jefferson County – Rita Cron, Atherton High; Angela Pleasant, James E. Farmer Elementary

Jessamine County – Shawn Carlstedt, Rosenwald Dunbar Elementary

Lincoln County – Joanna Stevens, Lincoln County High

Madison County – LenaKay Wilson, Mayfield Elementary

Menifee County – Lana Swartz, Menifee County High

Muhlenberg County – Kelly Melton, Muhlenberg North Middle

Murray Independent – Holly Bloodworth, Murray Elementary

Pendleton County – Michelle Lustenberg, Sharp Middle

Oldham County – Craig Grimm, North Oldham High; Gina Weber, Crestwood Elementary

Scott County – Willow Hambrick, Royal Spring Middle

Simpson County – Sharon Smith, Franklin Elementary

Taylor County – Jessica McCubbin, Taylor County Middle

The teachers will be honored Oct. 16 at a Frankfort ceremony with the naming of the Kentucky high, middle and elementary school teachers of the year. From this group of three finalists, the Kentucky Teacher of the Year will be named and will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition.